

REMARKS

After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-27 are pending in the application. Claims 1-17 have been indicated as being allowable. Claims 18, 24, and 27 have been amended to correct typographical errors. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments defined herein and the following remarks.

In the Office Action dated February 8, 2007, claims 24-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lee et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,128,804. It is respectfully submitted that Lee does not anticipate, teach, or suggest the invention recited in claims 24-26. Claim 24, from which claims 25-26 depend, discloses a vacuum cleaning system for a vehicle having a length of flexible vacuum hose operatively connected to a vacuum source and a storage space in the vehicle for storing the flexible vacuum hose, wherein the storage space is within a reach zone of at least one of the driver and the occupant of the vehicle. The vacuum cleaning system also includes means for preventing the hose from being withdrawn from the storage space when the vehicle is in the drive mode.

Lee discloses a vacuum system for a vehicle. The vacuum system is mounted in "a convenient location within the interior compartment" of the vehicle. See Abstract. As shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the vacuum system includes a litter box 18 mounted in the interior compartment and a vacuum canister 22 located in the trunk compartment. Col. 5, ll. 23-24 and 62-63. The two components are fluidly connected by a coupling component 28. Col. 5, ll. 29-33. A first hose portion 41 having a first end coupled to the interior rear wall of the litter box 18 and a second end coupled to the coupling member 28 is shown in Fig. 4 located in the litter box 18 for coupling the second hose portion 42 to the coupling portion 28. The first hose 41 is not disclosed as being removable from the litter box 18. As shown in Figs. 1 and 6, the second hose 42, 72 is coupled to the exterior wall of litter box 18, 56, either fixedly or detachably, for cleaning the interior carpets and seats of the vehicle. As shown in Fig. 9, the second hose portion 72, if detachable, can be stored in the litter box 56 when it is not being used. Col. 6, ll. 18-20. The second hose portion 72 can be removably stored in the litter box 56, allowing an occupant to remove the hose at any time, whether the vehicle is in drive or not. Therefore, the system is devoid of having means for preventing the hose portions from being withdrawn from the storage space when the vehicle is in drive mode. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Lee does not anticipate, teach or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 24-26. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee in view of Sepke, U.S. Patent No. 4,903,911, and Iaciovano, U.S. Patent No. 6,416,009. The Examiner contends that although Lee does not disclose a reel, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the apparatus in Lee to include an automatic means in Iaciovano in view of Sepke to prevent the hose from becoming unwound while in the storage space. Claim 18, which claims 19-23 include by dependency, discloses a vacuum cleaning system for a vehicle having a length of vacuum hose operatively connected to a vacuum source, a reel, on which the hose is mounted, and a storage space in the vehicle. The reel is mounted in the storage space. The vacuum system also includes an automatic disabling means preventing the hose from being removed from the storage space when the vehicle is in a drive mode.

Applicant submits that Lee is devoid of a reel with the hose mounted thereto and a storage space in the vehicle having the reel mounted in the storage space. Applicant also respectfully resubmits that the vacuum system in Lee is devoid of an automatic disabling means preventing the hose from being removed from the storage space when the vehicle is in a drive mode.

Iaciovano discloses a retractable hose reel. The reel includes a retaining member that is manually movable to a locking position, preventing or limiting the hose from being removed from the reel. Col. 1, ll. 36-41. Iaciovano is relevant only for its disclosure of a reel having a manual retaining member.

Sepke discloses a hose reel for "transporting an approximately 30-35 foot hose length from room to room in a house or building equipped with a central vacuum system." Col. 1, ll. 6-9. Sepke proposes a solution to "the extraordinary length of hose" and the "rather large diameter of hose" which prevents the usual coiling arrangement used for vacuum hoses of smaller cleaning devices to be used in the central vacuum system. Col. 1, ll. 32-37. Sepke is relevant only for its disclosure of a hose reel. Neither Iaciovano nor Sepke disclose a vacuum system having an automatic disabling means for preventing the hose from being removed from a storage space when the vehicle is in a drive mode as recited in claim 18. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the addition of Iaciovano and Sepke to Lee does overcome this deficiency in Lee and thus, the cited references, taken singly or in combination, do not disclose the vacuum configuration of claim 18, which claims 19-23 include by dependency. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee. The Examiner contends that although Lee does not disclose a locking means, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the apparatus in Lee to include a lock and control means for the lid of the box to prevent children from gaining access to the contents. Claim 27 discloses a vacuum cleaning system for an occupant of a vehicle, including a driver having a driver reach zone, and wherein each occupant has an occupant reach zone when seated in the vehicle. The vehicle also includes an internal surface within the driver reach zone and outside of the occupant reach zone. The vacuum system includes a length of flexible hose having one fixed to the vehicle and operatively connected to a vacuum source. The system has a storage space in one of the driver reach zone and the occupant reach zone for storing the flexible vacuum hose. The vacuum system has locking means preventing the hose from being withdrawn from the storage space and control means for disabling the locking means, permitting the hose to be withdrawn from the storage space.

Applicant respectfully resubmits that although the second hose portion in Lee can be detached from the port on the exterior wall of the litter box and can be stored in the litter box when it is not being used, Lee is devoid of locking means preventing the hose from being withdrawn from the storage space and control means for disabling the locking means, allowing the hose to be withdrawn from the storage space.

Entry of this Amendment under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is submitted to place the application in better form for appeal by simplifying the issues for appeal and does not present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to the claims are fully supported in the specification and would not require further search as similar subject matter has been previously allowed by the Examiner in other claims.

It is respectfully submitted that the Amendment traverses and overcomes all of the Examiner's rejections to the application as originally filed. It is further submitted that this Amendment has antecedent basis in the application as originally filed, including the specification, claims and drawings, and that this Amendment does not add any new subject matter to the application. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment places the

application in suitable condition for allowance; notice of which is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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WHIRLPOOL PATENTS COMPANY
500 Renaissance Drive – Ste. 102 MD750
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

/Tara M. Hartman/

Tara M. Hartman, Reg. No. 58,805
Telephone (269) 923-7441

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